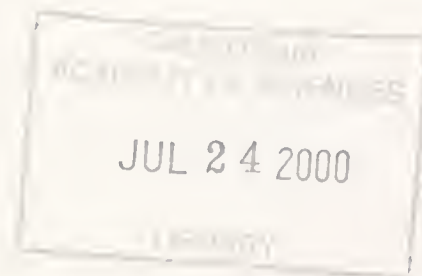
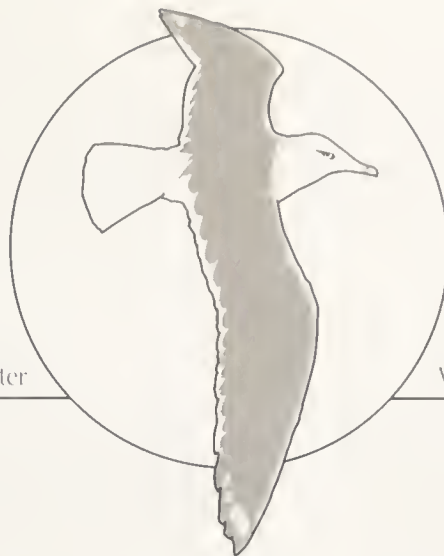


The Gull



Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 80, No. 10 November 1998

Great Thanks To A Great Person

In June 1998, Debey Zito's term as President of GGAS ended and it was a great loss to GGAS. Not that our new President, Alan Hopkins is not a great guy and will do a wonderful job, but Debey brought wonderful people skills to GGAS that kept us all on track. Debey helped move GGAS forward in these times that are so threatening to the Conservation movement.



When faced with the need for a new Gull Editor, Debey moved us through that difficult period and not only provided us with a new editor, John Gibbons, but also with a new graphic artist, Vicki Valentine, whose creativity has helped make the Gull one of

the most attractive Audubon newsletters in California. This was not the easiest task. Working out the Gull production process so that two talented but very busy people could work together in harmony took all those people skills in which Debey excels.

Under Debey's leadership the GGAS Board has been strengthened by the addition of Lillian Fujii as a simply wonderful Field Trip Chairperson and Louise

Harm who re-energized our Education Committee.

Through Debey's leadership we have helped establish the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge. Also, through Debey's vision we have established a working agreement with Audubon-California, our Audubon state office, under which our goal of creating an Alameda Audubon Center has become a joint project for both organizations.

In this modern world that seems to have so fast a pace, it's easy to lose focus and to feel isolated. Critical to the success of GGAS has been the collegial atmosphere of the Board where all feel welcome and feel they are contributing to a successful program. Debey has helped the Board work successfully and achieve a sense of camaraderie by bringing the Board together at several retreats. These retreats have helped us focus our attention on necessary goals and have enabled us to get to know one another well.

It's also important to have fun. By organizing fun events such as our wine and cheese tasting and our Art Auctions, Debey has helped make GGAS a social organization as well as a conservation and birding organization.

Thanks Debey! Through your efforts GGAS is in an excellent position to continue to be a leader in the Bay Area Conservation community.



Field Trips Calendar

GAS field trips are conducted by experienced birders who wish to share their knowledge and love of birds with others. All trips are free of charge (except for entrance fees that may be charged by regional, state, or national parks) and are open to everyone, regardless of membership in the National Audubon Society or Golden Gate chapter.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, STRYBING ARBORETUM.

8:00 a.m. See October Gull for details. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, SHIMADA FRIENDSHIP PARK AND RICHMOND MARINA.

8 a.m. See October Gull for details. Leader: Rusty Scalf (510) 666-9936.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, MINI-TRIP TO AQUATIC PARK, BERKELEY,

and other nearby areas. 9:30 a.m. See October Gull for details. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14, ARROWHEAD MARSH AND (ALAMEDA COUNTY).

8 a.m. See October Gull for details. Leader: Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983. *

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, COYOTE HILLS REGIONAL PARK.

Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the parking lot on the left (beyond the fee booth). From the East Bay take I-880 south to Rt. 84/Dumbarton Bridge exit. Turn right and continue west. Exit on Paseo Padre Pkwy. Turn right and continue north one mile to Patterson Ranch Road and follow signs to Coyote Hills. Bring lunch and liquids. This is a unique park with fresh water and salt pond habitat. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Peter Allen (415) 892-8063. \$ (*)

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22, COSUMNES RIVER PRESERVE

(Sacramento County). Meet at 8 a.m. at the main entrance of the North Berkeley BART Station (Sacramento Street, Berkeley) for carpooling and directions. The Nature Conservancy's Consumnes River Preserve features the best oak riparian habitat remaining in the Sacramento Valley. A Nature Conservancy docent will accompany us on this trip. We should see Central Valley specialties such as Sandhill Crane, Tundra Swan, Yellow-headed Blackbird and others. Bring lunch and liquids. Heavy rain cancels. Beginners welcome. Leader: Jeff Black. (510) 526-7068.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28, A DUCK WALK AT PALO ALTO BAYLANDS.

We should score a dozen ducks, and perhaps – with luck – score a score of ducks, as we walk off the Thanksgiving turkey. We live here year round but many ducks are only here for the mild winter. We'll also add a dozen shorebirds and numerous songbirds, raptors and rails. Expect the Lesser Scaup, two Teal, two Goldeneye, Canvasbacks, Gadwall, No. Shovelers, Canada Geese, American White Pelicans and more. Last year, rails were plentiful and visible. We'll bird the southern Bay shore. Heavy rain cancels. Expect cool and wet weather. Bring lunch. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the round cement duck pond, Palo Alto Bay Lands, east end of Embarcadero (east of Palo Alto Airport). Leader: Harry Fuller (415) 668-8229 (*)

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5 & 6 SACRAMENTO WILDLIFE REFUGES.

The itinerary for this traditional GGAS trip will be determined at the last minute so that the Margolins can take us to the birding locations that happen to be most productive at the time of our trip. On Saturday, we will meet at 9:00 a.m. in the visitors' parking lot at the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge. To get there from I-5 take the Norman Rd. exit (just north of the Glenn Co. line), and follow the signs to

the refuge. We will be looking for migrating geese (four species), a variety of ducks, raptors and Sandhill Cranes. Allow two and one-half hours driving time from the Bay Area. Steve and Renee will announce Sunday plans on Saturday. (AAA map of Sacramento Valley Region is helpful.) For accommodations the Blue Gum Willows Motel off I-5 at Willows (916) 934-5401 is suggested, and camping is possible at the State Park in Colusa. Bring lunch, scopes, and clothes appropriate for the valley in November (chilly). Heavy rain cancels trip. Leaders: Steve and Renee Margolin. (916) 342-6905. \$

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, STRYBING ARBORETUM.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular 1st Sunday of the month half-day trip. The Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several micro-habitats attracting a varied array of resident, migrant and vagrant birds. Beginners and all others welcome. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, MINI-TRIP TO LAKE MERRITT,

Oakland. Meet at the Rotary Science Center at 9:30 a.m. Go east on Grand Ave. to Lake Merritt. Continue to the Rotary Science Center (on the right just beyond the duck pond.) This is a good opportunity to review

waterfowl. Beginners welcome. Lunch optional. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, MONTEREY BAY AND COASTAL AREAS.

Meet at 9:00 a.m. in Monterey at the foot of the Coast Guard Pier at the southeast end of Cannery Row. Bring quarters for parking. We will bird this area then drive north, stopping at various spots including Moss Landing. We will be looking for loons, grebes, gulls, alcids, and rocky coastline species. Beginners welcome. Bring lunch and a scope if you have one. Leader: Don Starks (408) 266-2969 (eve.) (*)

PLAN AHEAD: November 22, 1998, Cosumnes River Preserve. Leader: Jeff Black

Trips marked with a (\$) go to parks or other sites which require an entrance fee. Carpooling arrangements will be attempted by leader for trips marked with a (*). Problems, etc.: If you need a ride or can take a passenger (even if a trip is not marked with an (*), if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, if you have suggestions for trips, or if you are interested in leading a trip, call Lillian Fujii (510) 256-4167, Field Trips Committee Chair.

Birds & Art

On Wednesday, December 2, 1998, there will be an Artist's Reception for the paintings of one of our members, Leigh Keller Reagan, at the Lakeview Club overlooking Lake Merritt. The reception will take place between the hours of 6 PM and 8PM. Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be served as Leigh introduces her oils and watercolors of the magnificent herons, cranes and waterfowl found throughout the Bay Area and parts of the world.

Reagan's work has received international press and is collected by corporations and collectors from around the world. Lithographs of her wonderful painting of a great blue heron entitles "Protector" have raised funds for the National Audubon Society, the Lake Merritt Institute and the International Crane Foundation.

The Lakeview Club is located in the Kaiser Center on Lake Merritt in Oakland. The address is 300 Lakeside Drive, 28th Floor. If you can't make the reception, exhibit dates are November 9 to December 31. Come and enjoy.



Ah, the call of adventure beckoned and we answered! When friends begged us to join them on a trip to South Africa, my husband and I were recovering from hip surgery and back surgery (we always do everything together!). With hope, we planned a trip which would include something from the wish list for each of the six of us: Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, a 2 night trip on a train with restored cars from the early 1900's, plenty of time in Capetown, wildflowers north of there, fine dining and, for me, some time in Botswana's Okavanga Delta where wild life and birds abound. The delta is one of those legendary places to birders along with Costa Rica and various other worldwide birding "hot spots." Everyone who birds has one place on his dream list; the Okavanga was way up there for me.

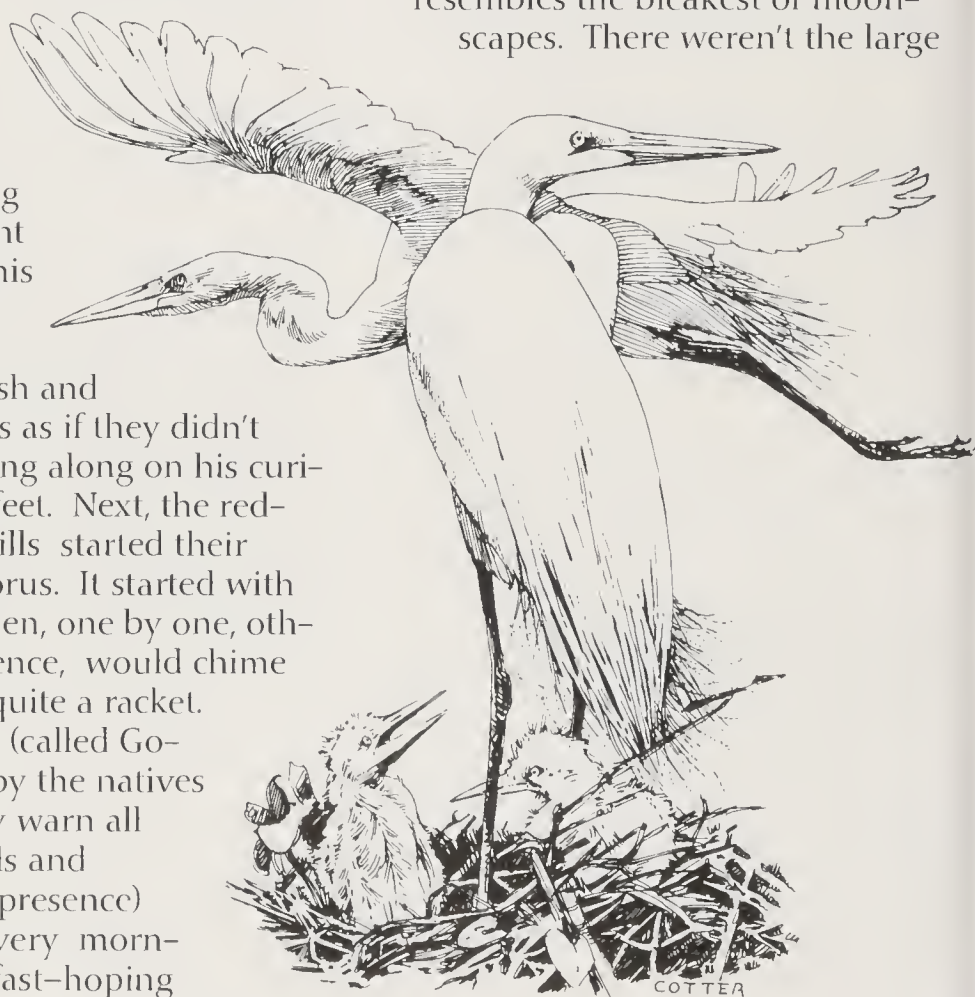
The Okavanga Delta is a geological phenomena created by the constant movement of the great Rift Valley on the African continent. Several rivers in countries north of Botswana combine to send water to form a delta where, having no outlet, the water literally seeps into the Kalahari desert. The amount of water is dependent on rains filling the northern rivers so that timing your visit can be tricky. We were at the end of the dry season so there wasn't much tall grass to impede viewing of animals. Plus, animals were concentrated where water was available. Rains in Angola

were slowly sending tempting trickles of water to the river Khwaii at our first camp, Machaba. It was still one of the most dusty spots I can remember experiencing—fine, white, powdery dust everywhere.

Our tent overlooked the dry river bed. We slept with the tent flap open, the screening allowing me to see the hyenas trotting back and forth during the night, incessantly whooping to each other, not the familiar "laugh", but a creepy type of howl. At dawn troops of bush babies came swinging through the trees to hide for the day. They were so well-hidden in a large tree that try as we might we couldn't spot them in daylight.

Soon a young male elephant announced his dawn arrival by walking through brush and tree branches as if they didn't exist, crackling along on his curiously silent feet. Next, the red-billed hornbills started their morning chorus. It started with one voice, then, one by one, others, in sequence, would chime until it was quite a racket. Grey Louries (called Go-Away birds by the natives because they warn all other animals and birds of our presence) greeted us every morning at breakfast—hoping

for a hand-out along with green jewel-like Meyer's parrots. It was at this camp that our excellent guide, Pula, found a pack of wild dogs so stuffed from their kill that they barely moved from their naps in the shade. They were larger than I had pictured and look like the powerful hunting machines they are: massive jaws, long legs, sturdy, muscled bodies. They hunt medium-sized antelopes but will take small prey (rabbits) and animals as large as zebras. They are very rare, their numbers dwindling from diseases caught from domestic animals. The large herds of elephant have decimated the land, which resembles the bleakest of moon-scapes. There weren't the large



numbers of animals that we saw in Kenya and Tanzania, but we saw many species, some new to us. Curiously, some of the same animals and birds went by different names. e.g. an antelope called a topi in East Africa is called a tsessebe in South Africa. There were storks, cranes, ibis, geese, egrets and herons, raptors aplenty, ground hornbills, iridescent starlings and the striking lilac-breasted rollers. It was enough to keep a smile on my face!

Our next stop was southwest in the heart of the delta. Pom Pom Camp is set on a reed-rimmed lagoon filled with hippos. The sunset canoe ride was spectacular. The flat-bottomed mokoro was poled along in shallow water so that we wouldn't surprise a submerged hippo. Hippos dredge paths, like highways, through the reeds to the shore where they graze at night. We circled small islands in the swamp, soaking up the sight of malachite kingfishers (surely a favorite of all birders), pied-billed and pygmy kingfishers, glossy starlings, jacanas and adorable bee eaters. As the sun dropped lower, becoming a typical red African sunset, huge flocks of egrets and herons began returning to roost for the night in the swamp's safety. The sky was filled with these graceful birds which, upon landing, decorated the landscape like multiple ornaments on a Christmas tree. At last light, we gave ourselves and the bottom of the canoe another layer of insect repellent and poled

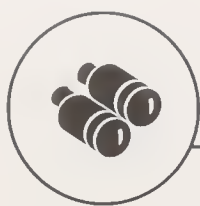
silently by a giraffe grazing on shore near camp. That night, after dinner, we put the spotlight on a nearby hippo who munched rudely with its mouth open, unconcerned with its audience. Why be afraid when you're its size?

We left our vehicle one morning for a walk on the wild side, studying plant life, foot prints and scat (and there was a lot of it!). Our guide was armed and we were walking in an area with little cover for a predator but we still felt like we could be someone's lunch. At Pom Pom the game drives covered much more territory because there was more to graze upon and the herds were scattered. Birding the lagoon was the way to go—much more was happening. Most amazing of all were the twilight sounds of all those birds which ultimately gave way to the high-pitched peeps of small frogs, the booming of the larger frogs and the occasional grunts, snorts and splashes of the hippos. Morning brought the most unusual phenomena—the exodus of ALL the birds at one time, resulting in a sound similar to a jet airplane taking off! Astounding! The birds dispersed throughout the delta region to feed during the day. Shortly, we heard the beautiful song of the equally beautiful Heuglin's robin just outside the tent. This was followed by the swamp boubous' duet. A pair of boubous combine a harsh rattle from one bird at the exact same time its mate whistles a long note. With perfect timing

they create a unique and lovely song, characteristic of the swamp. Pom Pom's camp manager and his wife were avid birders who had found their paradise. They had one guest who had amassed 6000 some species world-wide. If you were a dedicated lister you could certainly add to your list here!

In Capetown we visited the fabulous and world-famous Kirstenbosch Gardens where I feasted my eyes on sunbirds along with many other feathered beauties. I must be mellowing since I know I missed many sightings of life birds without an expert guide. . . and it doesn't even bother me. I managed to add a good number to my life list anyway; and I refuse to list one I haven't really seen well. The chance to be within a few feet of jackass penguins at Simonstown was quite a treat. Penguins are cunning birds indeed, especially the fuzzy juveniles, so much fatter than the adults to which I can relate after so many fine meals). A tiny nestling peeked out from under its mom at us tourists—lucky us!

I don't know if I will return to Africa. Its charms have fascinated so many, including me. It keeps drawing back. But I am happily looking at my own habitat again. It's been a good year for birds in my yard and I'm sure this winter won't disappoint. I just heard the first golden-crowned sparrow of the fall—October 1. Bring on the migrants! I'm ready!



August 29 – Sept 25, 1998

Fall is in the air, with an abundance of migrants arriving in our area. As of Sept. 27, the usual Golden-crowned Sparrows arrived at my home in Berkeley, the morning after our first light rain. This observer also witnessed the thrilling spectacle of tens of thousands of Vaux's Swifts bedding down for the night in a large chimney in Healdsburg, SON, where they have been doing so during September for about the last ten years. Their rapid "vortex" flight pattern filled the sky for many minutes while they gradually entered their temporary home. On the warbler

front, there were enough observations during the period to fill an entire column: For instance, on Sept. 21 alone, at least 18 species of Wood Warblers were recorded on Point Reyes! Many thanks to the nearly 80 observers for their contributions.

Albatross to Ducks

One Laysan Albatross was recorded over the period, on a Sept. 12 pelagic trip to the Farallones (MMo). Black-footed Albatross were seen in good numbers, with the highest totals being 55 on the Aug. 31 Cordell Banks pelagic trip (RS) and 65 on a pelagic trip off the Sonoma coast on the same date (DN). The largest number of Northern Fulmars was 60 on the Aug. 31 Cordell Banks trip (RS). High count for Pink-footed Shearwaters was 50 birds on the Sept. 12 Farallones trip (Mike Moran). Only two Flesh-footed Shearwaters were reported, seen on a Monterey Bay pelagic trip Sept. 5 (DLSh), and on a HUM pelagic trip Sept. 6, on which two Short-tailed Shearwaters were also observed (SHA). Possibly millions of Sooty Shearwaters were seen from the Monterey shoreline early in September. Black-vented Shearwaters numbered over 1000 on the Sept. 5 Monterey pelagic trip (DLSh), and thousands more were seen along the an Mateo coast Sept. 7 (PS).

A total of 20 Wilson's Storm-Petrels were reported, including one on the Aug. 31 Sonoma pelagic trip (Dan Nelson), 2 on a Sept. 8 Monterey Bay pelagic trip (DLSh), 16 on a Sept. 12 pelagic trip in waters off Santa Cruz (BM). Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels numbered 12 on the Aug. 31 Cordell Banks trip (RS), and high count for Ashy Storm-Petrels was 6000 on the Santa Cruz pelagic trip Sept. 12 (BM). Black Storm-Petrels totaled 500 on the Sept. 8 Monterey pelagic trip (DLSh). Extremely high numbers of Least Storm-Petrels were reported, with 253 seen on the Sept. 8

Monterey pelagic trip, the highest in Monterey Bay since 1983 (DLSh), and 733 birds were recorded on the Santa Cruz pelagic trip Sept. 12 (BM). The Sept. 5 Monterey pelagic trip scored a Red-billed Tropicbird (DLSh). This species breeds in Mexico and is a rare and irregular fall and summer visitor to our coast.

A Least Bittern continued at Olema Marsh, MRN, through at least Sept. 25 (JW, MOB). An immature Little Blue Heron was found on the Bayshore Trail in Richmond, CC, Sept. 19 (CS). A single White-faced Ibis continued in its unusual location at the Carmel R. mouth, MTY through Sept. 7 (MPRBA) and another report came from Crespi Pond, Pacific Grove, MTY, Sept. 6 (MPRBA). Nine Greater White-fronted Geese made a timely appearance at Abbott's Lagoon, PRNS, Sept. 20 (EG). The first Eurasian Wigeons reported for the season were two in Bolinas, MRN, Sept. 7 (KG), and a single bird was there Sept. 13 (KH). A single Harlequin Duck was found at Brooks Island, CC, Sept. 9 and 15 (SG), and another at the Fish docks, PRNS, MRN (RL).

Raptors to Murrelets

Reports of migrating raptors got off to a slow start, with a Broad-winged Hawk at the PRNS Lighthouse, MRN, Sept. 23 (RS) and several Sept. 24 at Hawk Hill, MRN (RS). A Ferruginous Hawk was sighted at the Clifton Ct. Forebay, CC, Sept. 17 (SG) and another Sept. 24 at Hawk Hill, MRN (RS). However, by the last days of September, raptor sightings increased dramatically; these accounts will be presented in next month's column. American Golden-Plovers were found in three locations, one at the Modesto Sewage Ponds, STA, Aug. 29 (KVV), one on Skaggs Island Road, NAP, Sept. 1 (SH) and another at Pescadero Marsh, SM, Sept. 20 (PM). Two Pacific Golden-Plovers were also found at the

Abbreviations for Observers: SA, Steve Abbott; AB, Alan Baron; FB, Florence Bennett; JB, Jim Booker; BB, Bob Brandriff; BBu, Betty Burridge; KB, Ken Burton; JC, Josiah Clark; LC, Luke Cole; IIC, Cotter Hugh; SD, Stephen Davies; PD, Pierre Delastre; TE, Todd Easterlea; ME, Mark Eaton; AE, Al Eisner; MF, Mike Feighner; DE, David Fix; HF, Harry Fuller; SG, Steve Glover; EG, Ed Greaves; GG, George Griffith; KG, Kevin Guse; SH, Steve Hampton; KH, Keith Hansen; SHa, Stan Harris; KHe, Kristi Hein; BH, Bob Hirt; HH, Helen Holm; AH, Alan Hopkins; LH, Lisa Hug; KI, Ken Irwin; KK, Keith Kwan; GL, Gary Lester; RL, Randy Little; CL, Calvin Lou; DM, Dave Macintyre; SM, Sylvia Malding; MM, Mike Mammoser; JM, John Mariana; BM, Bert McKee; PM, Peter Metropulos; MOB, Many Observers; MMo, Mike Moran; JMo, Joe Morlan; DMu, Dan Murphy; GN, Nafus Gary; DN, Dan Nelson; DvN, David Nelson; KN, Kristie Nelson; JP, Jude Power; PP, Peter Pyle; JR, John Robinson; MR, Mike Rogers; AR, Andrew Rush; SR, Steve Rottenborn; JRu, Joe Ruber; IS, Ivan Samuels; PS, Paul Saraceni; CS, Charles Sellers; DoS, Doug Shaw; DLSh, Debra Love Shearwater; DS, David Shewell; DShu, Dave Shuford; BS, Bo Soderstrom; RS, Rich Stallcup; ES, Emilie Strauss; ST, Scott Terrill; RT, Ron Thorn; DT, Dorothy Tobkin; KVV, Kent Van Vuren; CV, Chuck Vaughn; DW, Weber David; JW, John Westlake; AW, Alan White; JW, Jerry White; DWi, David Wimpfheimer; AWi, Adam Winer; DeW, Dennis Wolf

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: AMSP, Andrew Molera State Park; BSOL, Big Sur Ornithology Lab; CBRC, California Bird Review Committee; CC, Contra Costa; CCRS, Coyote Creek Riparian Station; GGP, Golden Gate Park; HUM, Humboldt; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MNO, Mono; MPRBA, Monterey Peninsula Rare Bird Alert; Monterey, MTY; NAP, Napa; PLA, Placer; PRNS Point Reyes National Seashore; SBT, San Benito; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; STA, Stanislaus; TRI, Trinity; YOL, Yolo

Warbler sightings

Virginia's Warbler
Sept. 7 Carmel R., MTY MPRBA

Lucy's Warbler
Sept. 79 Carmel R., MTY MPRBA
Sept. 16 Big Sur, MTY MPRBA
Sept. 21 AMSP, MTY MPRBA

Cape May Warbler
Sept. 20-22 Middle L., GGP, SF HC fide DvN, AR

Black-throated Blue Warbler
Sept. 18 Presidio Blvd. & Bernard Ave., SF IS
Sept. 21 (2) Lighthouse, PRNS, MRN RS
Sept. 21 Road Forks Pool, PRNS, MRN RS
Sept. 25 Phipps Ranch, SM AWi

Black-throated Green Warbler
Sept. 21-25 Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN RS, KB, DoS
Sept. 21 Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN JR

Blackburnian Warbler
Aug. 30, 31 Owl Canyon, Bodega, SON KG, DoS
Sept. 22, 23 Owl Canyon, Bodega, SON DN, BBu
~Sept. 22 Farallones KH
Sept. 25 Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN LH

Yellow-throated Warbler (Idenroica dominical)
Sept. 9 Carmel R., MTY MPRBA

Prairie Warbler
Sept. 3 Muddy Hollow Dam, PRNS, MRN DWi
Sept. 6 Lighthouse, PRNS, MRN DW
Sept. 7 GGP, SF HC, JMo
Sept. 9 L. Merced, SF DMu
Sept. 17, 19, 20 Lighthouse St. Pk., SCZ MPRBA
Sept. 20 Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN DoS
Sept. 21 Lighthouse, PRNS, MRN RS
Sept. 22 Farallones KH

Prothonotary Warbler

Sept. 6, 7, 9, 16 Carmel R., MTY MPRBA
Sept. 12-16 AMSP, MTY MPRBA
Sept. 7 near Cam Beach, HUUM DL, JP
Sept. 7, 8 Hilficker Wildlife Area, HUUM DF
Sept. 15-25 North L., GGP, SI JC MOB
Sept. 21-24 Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN RS, KB
Sept. 25 Bodega Bay, SON DN
Sept. 25 Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN DoS

Ovenbird
Sept. 5 Banded at BSOL, MTY MPRBA

Northern Waterthrush
Aug. 29-30 Guadalupe R., SCL MR, MM
Sept. 2 BSOL, MTY MPRBA
Sept. 5 (2) Banded at BSOL, MTY MPRBA
Sept. 6, 7, 12 (1-5) Carmel R., MTY MPRBA
Sept. 6 Middle L., GGP, SI MF
Sept. 7 Redwood Shores Sewage Plant, SM RT
Sept. 11 Stinson Beach, MRN RS
Sept. 12 Stevens Ck., SCL MR
Sept. 13 Pine Gulch Ck., MRN KH
Sept. 13 L. Merced, SF LC
Sept. 16 Pacifica, SM JMo
Sept. 16, 17 Banded at BSOL, MTY MPRBA
Sept. 20, 21 (2) Carmel R., MTY MPRBA
Sept. 25 (2) Guadalupe R., SCL SR

Mourning Warbler (Oporornis philadelphia)-
~Sept. 15 Farallones KH

Hooded Warbler
Sept. 6 (lingering summer bird), HUUGL
Sept. 24 Pacifica, SM JMo

Canada Warbler
Aug. 29 Owl Canyon, Bodega, SON MF
Sept. 25 near Phipps Ranch, SM BM

Modesto Sewage Ponds Aug. 29 and Sept. 4 (KVV, SG), another was at BSOL, MTY, Sept. 2 (MPRBA) and there were 8 near Drake's Beach, PRNS, MRN, Sept. 20 (EG).

Solitary Sandpipers were seen at Salinas, MTY, Sept. 6 (MPRBA), at Mono L. Co. Pk., MNO, Sept. 7 (PM), and at Bridgeport Reservoir, MNO, Sept. 6 (ES). The first CRBC review species this month was a basic-plumaged adult **Bar-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa lapponica*), seen off and on at Ravenswood Preserve, SM, Sept. 12-20 (RT, AE, DM). This species breeds in West Alaska and is extremely rare in California. Individual Semipalmated Sandpipers were at the Moonglow Dairy, MTY, Sept. 12 (MPRBA), at the Modesto Sewage Ponds, STA, Aug. 29 and Sept. 4 (KVV, SG) and at Moss Landing, MTY, Sept. 5 (MPRBA). A Sanderling, rare inland, was at Mono Lake, MNO, Sept. 7 (PM). A total of 28 Pectoral Sandpipers were reported over MRN, MTY, SM, SF, and TRI Counties, while 11 Stilt Sandpipers showed up in SCL, SON, MNO and MTY counties during the period. A Sharp-tailed Sandpiper put in an appearance at Abbott's Lagoon Sept. 20 (EG). Four rare Buff-breasted Sandpipers were seen at King Salmon Beach, HUM, Sept. 9 (KN). The Ruff that appeared at CCRS, SCL, at the beginning of August, continued through at least Sept. 7 (MR and MOB).

Long-tailed Jaegers were relatively abundant, with 10 sighted on the Cordell Banks Aug. 30 pelagic trip (RS), 4 on the Aug. 31 Sonoma pelagic trip (DN), 21 and 3 on the Sept. 5 and 8 Monterey Bay pelagic trips (DLSh), 6 on a Sept. 6 SCZ pelagic trip (DLSh), two on the HUumbolt pelagic trip Sept. 6 (SHa), and another 3 on a Sept. 16 Monterey Bay pelagic trip (MPRBA). A rare inland observation of this Jaeger species was on Rt. 37, SOL, Sept. 4 (SA). The Laughing Gull first seen Aug. 18 was found again at Stinson Beach, MRN, Aug. 29 (MF),

where it remained until at least Sept. 13 (MOB). Sabine's Gulls had a high count of 453 on the Sept. 12 SCZ pelagic trip (BM), and there were 7 rare inland sightings during the period: at Clair Engle L., TRI, Sept. 7, a first county record (MF), at Mono L., MNO, Sept. 5-6 (DSHu, ES), at Crowley L., MNO, Sept. 13 (AE), on Road 124 in E. YOL county Sept. 13 & 17 (SA), at O'Neill Forebay, MER, Sept. 17 (KVV), two at Folsom L., PLA, Sept. 18 (PD), and 3 at L. Tahoe, PLA, Sept. 19 (TE).

Reports of Black Terns came from Bridgeport Reservoir, MNO, Sept. 8 (12 birds), off Santa Cruz in Monterey Bay, MTY, Sept. 8 (one bird) (DLSh), two birds each at the Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant, SCL, Sept. 9 & 19 (DS, BH) and on the Santa Cruz pelagic trip Sept. 12 (BM). Two inland Arctic Terns were at Lake Tahoe, PLA, Sept. 19 (TE). The Black Skimmers maintained their post in Santa Clara County, with up to 10 birds at the Sunnyvale Water Pollution control Plant through Sept. 19 (SR, MOB). Two other skimmers were spotted at Elkhorn Slough, MTY, Sept. 2 (MPRBA), and one on Pajaro Rd., MTY, Sept. 7 (MPRBA). Pelagic

trips again recorded several Craveri's Murrelets: 6 on Monterey Bay, MTY, Sept. 5 (DLSh), at least 2 on Sept. 8 (DLSh), 13 in waters off Santa Cruz Sept. 12 (BM), and 50 on a Sept. 16 Monterey Bay pelagic trip (MPRBA).

Doves to Wood Warblers

The first report of a White-winged Dove for the season came from Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN, Sept. 21 (JR). A Yellow-billed Cuckoo was at AMSP, MTY, Sept. 20 & 21 (MPRBA). Unusual for their locations were two Costa's Hummingbirds at Fish Slough, MNO, Sept. 5 (PM) and a Broad-tailed Hummingbird at Foster City, SM, Sept. 8 (RT). A Black-chinned Hummingbird, a first San Mateo County record, was at the Coyote Pt. Museum Sept. 20 (RT).

An **Eastern Wood Pewee** (*Contopus virens*) was reported at the Farallones Sept. 12 (PP fide RS). This Pewee, sibling species to the Western Wood Pewee, is exceedingly rare in California, with only a handful of previous records, and is distinguishable in the field by its call. Another possible sighting occurred Sept. 24 at

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the PRNS Lighthouse, MRN (DoS). We hope that these observations will be submitted to the CBRC for review. A good fall bird was a Least Flycatcher at Tilden Pk., CC, Sept. 8 (SG), followed by three more, one at the PRNS Lighthouse Sept. 23-24 (RS, DoS), one at Campbell Cove, SON, Sept. 25 (DN), and another at the Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN, Sept. 25 (DoS). Two Gray Flycatchers were at Fish Slough, MNO, Sept. 5 (PM). A Dusky Flycatcher was seen at Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN, Sept. 11 & 22-23 (RS). Other individuals were reported from Mt. Trashmore, HUM, Sept. 8 (DF), the PRNS Lighthouse, MRN, Sept. 23 (RS), the Farallones Sept. 22 (KH), and the Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN, Sept. 24-25 (DF, DoS). Single Eastern Kingbirds, seen in the fall near the coast, were at BSOL, MTY, Sept. 1-2 (JB, MPRBA), at the Road forks Area, PRNS, MRN, Sept. 5 (DoS), at Muddy Hollow, PRNS, Sept. 12,13 (DoS) and at Ten Mile Rd., MEN, Sept. 13 (JW).

There were 4 reports of Plumbeous Vireos: from BSOL, MTY, Aug. 30 (MPRBA), from Bridgeport Reservoir, MNO, Sept. 6 (ES), from Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN, Sept. 22 (KB) and near Cloverdale Rd., SM, Sept. 25 (BM). The **Blue-headed Vireo** (*Vireo solitarius*), sister species to the Plumbeous vireo and also a recent split from the Solitary Vireo, as discussed in previous columns, is a very rare fall transient, with most records from the Farallones (Small, 1994). This bird was reported from two locations during the period, the first at Mt. Vision Rd., PRNS, MRN, Sept. 18-19 (RS, DoS), and the second at the Marin Headlands, MRN, Sept. 24 (RS). Just as exciting was the report of a *Philadelphia Vireo* (*Vireo philadelphicus*), an Eastern U.S. species and very rare but regular fall transient, with 4-6 records/year in CA (Small, 1994). This bird was sighted at Owl Canyon, Bodega Bay, SON, Sept. 5 and remained through at least Sept. 12 (DN, DoS, PD). Single Red-eyed

Vireos were at the Carmel R. mouth, MTY, Sept. 2 (MPRBA), at New Willows, PRNS, MRN, Sept. 2 (JW), the Farallones, Sept. 13 (Keith Hansen), and at the Phipps Ranch, SM, Sept. 23 (AWi). Two more birds were at both the Mendoza Ranch and the Lighthouse, PRNS, MRN, Sept. 21 (RS, JR).

A Cactus Wren was spotted Sept. 5 building a nest at Fish Slough, MNO, establishing a first nesting record for Northern CA (PM). Two **Veerys** (*Catharus fuscescens*) were reported from AMSP, MTY. One was banded on Sept. 21, and a second individual was discovered later that day and was seen again on the next (MPRBA). This thrush breeds in southern Canada and northern U.S., excluding the West Coast, and is an extremely rare transient, mostly seen in the fall (Small, 1994). Adding to the mix of unusual species was the **Gray Catbird** (*Dumetella carolinensis*), a rare but regular fall transient, reported from two separate locations. The first was at the Bodega Head, SON, Sept. 22 & 25 (AW, BM) and the second was at the Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN Sept. 22-24 (RS, DoS). Individual Sage Thrashers were reported from 5 locations: at Chimney Rock Rd., PRNS, MRN, Sept. 3 (RS), at Lonoake Rd., SBT, Sept. 4 (MPRBA), at Moss Landing, MTY, Sept. 5 (MPRBA), on the Farallones ~ Sept. 13 (KH), and at the Bodega Head, SON, Sept. 21 (DN).

Reports of interesting Wood Warblers were amazingly abundant during the period with a whopping total of over 260 birds (see chart)! Included are two CBRC species that we hope will be submitted for review. The **Yellow-throated Warbler** (*Geothlypis trichas*) is a very rare fall transient and breeds in the Southeastern U.S. The **Mourning Warbler** (*Oporornis philadelphia*), a rare fall transient, hails from the north-eastern U.S. and south-east Canada. To save space, accounts of several species are not detailed, although

observers are credited. Not included are sightings of at least 78 Blackpoll Warblers over 8 counties and the Farallones, 15 Tennessee Warblers over 3 counties and the Farallones, 10 Northern Parulas over 4 counties, 22 Chestnut-sided Warblers over 8 counties and the Farallones, 20 Magnolia Warblers over 5 counties and the Farallones, 23 Palm Warblers over 7 counties and the Farallones, 15 Black and White Warblers over 4 counties, and 28 American Redstarts over 6 counties and the Farallones.

Tanagers to Orioles

A male Summer Tanager of the eastern "ruber" race, first reported Aug. 27, remained near the Muddy Hollow Dam in the Limantour area of PRNS, MRN, until at least Sept. 12 (KK and MOB). Other reports of single birds were from South San Jose, SCL, Sept. 17 (JM), AMSP, MTY, Sept. 21-23 (MPRBA), and Mad R. Co. Pk., HUM, Sept. 10 (KI). During the week preceding Sept. 18, there were two Summer Tanagers at Salinas, MTY (MPRBA). An exceptional number (112) of Western Tanagers were at Coyote Pt., SM, Sept. 11 (RT). Unusual for San Francisco was a Green-tailed Towhee at the East Wash, Lincoln Pk., Sept. 12-15 (AH, MOB). Two other reports of that species were from Pleasant Hill, CC, Sept. 22 (HII, SG) and from the Coyote Pt. Museum, SM, Sept. 21 (RT).

Fall sparrows put in a good appearance, with a total of 17 Clay-colored Sparrows reported from MRN, MTY, SM, SF, and SON counties plus 7 on the Farallones. Single Brewer's Sparrows were at Coyote Pt., SM, Sept. 11 (RT), the Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN, Sept. 12-13 (MF, RS), and at GGP, SF, Sept. 13-14 (LC, DN), as well as 2 at the Farallones, Sept. 22 (KH). Five Vesper Sparrows were reported, one each at Hookton Slough Trail, HUM, Sept. 10 (JR), the Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN, Sept. 12,13

Letter from the Editor

Well, as you all must know by now, I am giving up my post as Editor of the *Gull* after two years and twenty-four issues. In some ways that does not seem like a very long time, but when I think of the fun I've had, the people I've met, and all of the wonderful things that I've learnt it seems like a very long time. I came into the position and the GGAS board as a fresh face, having only been a member and California resident for just over one year. But before I knew it I was well acquainted with many of the birders and conservation issues in this area. Talk about a crash course; but what better way to dive right into the thick of it?

I have to admit that even though the *Gull* only comes out once a month, in 1998 when spare time is very "sparse," the newsletter can be a time-consuming job. Luckily the *Gull*

comes equipped with wonderful people who made my work so much easier. People like the GGAS board who have always given me support, Vicki Valentine and the San Francisco Art Department who do the newsletter's layout and are responsible for making eight pieces of paper look as great as they can, Jan Andersen, who knew every word of every issue by proofreading each month, and of course, some of the most important people to a publication – the writers. Without them I would have had to depend on just my writing, environmental promotions in the mail, and a occasional contributed article to piece the *Gull* together. But luckily I knew I could depend on them to help fill those empty pages each month.

There's Arthur Feinstein, who among the many hats he wears, also dons a reporters cap each month to let us know what's

going on on the environmental front. A huge task to take on is the writing of the Observations column and fortunately we have had both Hugh Cotter and Collin Murphy volunteer their efforts to complete this most important part of the puzzle, and Lillian Fujii who has let us know each month about the wonderful field trips she has helped organize. Harry Fuller has been a wonderful teacher, giving us a dose of ornithological history with each issue. And there is also some one who has really helped the *Gull* and me along with her monthly articles, which are not only always on time and dependable, but also interesting and fun – Meg Pauletich our "Backyard Birder."

Thank you so much to everyone who has helped me along the way.

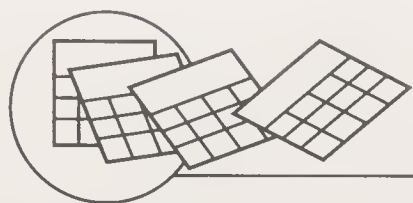
John

(BB, RS), at the Ukiah Sewage Plant, MEN, Sept. 12 (CV fide JW), at the Strybing Arboretum, GGP, SF (JC) and at Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN, Sept. 22 (RS). Single Lark Buntings were found at Chimney Rock Rd., PRNS, MRN, Sept. 5-7 (DWi, JR) at the PRNS, MRN, Lighthouse Sept. 6 (BB), at Pt. St. George, DN, Sept. 7-8 (AB), at Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN, Sept. 16 (RS), at CCRS, SCL, Sept. 16 (MR), and at MacKerricher St. Pk., MEN, Sept. 21 (DT). Unusual was a Sage Sparrow of the *nevadensis* (Great Basin race) at Coyote Pt., SM, Sept. 14 (RT). A White-throated Sparrow was at the Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN, Sept. 22 (RS). Individual Black-throated Sparrows

were at the Farallones on, Sept. 13 & 22 (KH). Three Chestnut-collared Longspurs were at Abbott's Lagoon, PRNS, MRN, Sept. 20 (EG), and a Lapland Longspur was at Pt. St. George, DN, Sept. 7 (AB).

There were sightings of 6 single Rose-breasted Grosbeaks from MTY and SON counties during the period, and individual Blue Grosbeaks were at Pacific Grove, MTY, Sept. 6 (MPRBA), and at Campbell Cove, SON, Sept. 25 (DN). At least 10 reports of individual Indigo Buntings came from MRN, MTY, SON, SM, and STA counties. A Dickcissel was spotted, Sept. 22 at the Farallones (KH). Bobolinks were also very abundant, with at least 27 seen

over MRN, MTY and TRI counties and the Farallones. Yellow-headed Blackbirds made their normal fall appearance, with at least 27 birds reported from, MEN, MRN, MTY, SM, SCL, and TRI counties and the Farallones. Rounding out our picture of fall migration were individual Orchard Orioles at Owl Canyon, Bodega Bay, SON, Sept. 7 (DN), at the Farallones ~ Sept. 13 and 22 (KH), in Pacific Grove, MTY, Sept. 16-17 (MPRBA), at BSOL, MTY, Sept. 21 (MPRBA), at Bodega Head, SON, Sept. 21 (DvN), and 2-4 birds at Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN, Sept. 21-24 (JR, MOB).



Ocotber Meeting

Crunching Numbers in California

For our next program, the National Audubon Society's Habitat and Population Coordinator for California, Mike Sellors, will give a slide presentation on a program entitled "Crunching Numbers in California." It addresses the loss of wildlife habitat in the Golden State due to human population growth and sprawling development. Several of the state's major habi-



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7:30 p.m.

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tat types will be discussed, including riparian areas, chaparral, coastal sage scrub, coastal and interior wetlands, and native grasslands. The program will highlight bird species within these habitats that have been adversely impacted by human population growth and sprawl. Species encountered in this tour of the Golden State range from the California Condor, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Western Tanager, to the California Clapper Rail, Tricolored Blackbird, and Western Burrowing Owl.



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